R E P O R T R E S U M E S

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REPORT OF RESEARCH PROJECT TO DETERMINE EFFECT OF MASS CIRCULATION OF MACOMB COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE STUDENT NEWSPAPER ON PUBLIC IMAGE OF THE COLLEGE.

BY- MEYERSON, MILES

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ONE HUNDRED TELEPHONE INTERVIEWS WERE CONDUCTED TO DETERMINE IF MASS CIRCULATION OF THE CAMPUS PAPER (PUBLISHED AT THREE-WEEK INTERVALS) ALONG WITH A COMMUNITY DAILY PAPER WAS HARMFUL OR OTHERWISE TO THE PUBLIC IMAGE OF THE COLLEGE. THE EXPERIMENTAL GROUP COMPRISED THOSE WHO RECEIVED BOTH THE STUDENT PAPER AND THE DAILY PAPER. THE CONTROL GROUP CONSISTED OF THOSE WHO DID NOT GET THE STUDENT PAPER, SINCE THEY DID NOT SUBSCRIBE TO THE DAILY WITH WHICH IT WAS DISTRIBUTED. FIVE QUESTIONS WERE ASKED--(1) HOW OFTEN DO YOU READ THE DAILY, (2) HAVE YOU EVER READ THE COLLEGE PAPER, (3) HOW OFTEN, (4) DO YOU BELIEVE THE COLLEGE IS MEETING THE EDUCATIONAL NEEDS OF ITS STUDENTS, AND (5) HOW DO YOU FEEL THE BEHAVIOR OF THE STUDENTS COMPARES WITH THAT OF OTHERS THROUGHOUT THE UNITED STATES. THOSE EXPOSED TO THE STUDENT NEWSPAPER RATED BOTH THE PERFORMANCE OF THE COLLEGE AND THE BEHAVIOR OF ITS STUDENTS HIGHER THAN DID THOSE IN THE CONTROL GROUP. ALSO, THERE WERE MANY MORE IN THE CONTROL GROUP WHO EXPRESSED A LACK OF OPINION THAN IN THE EXPERIMENTAL GROUP. THE RESULTS REINFORCE THE HYPOTHESIS THAT THOSE WHO KNOW MORE ABOUT THE COLLEGE HAVE A BETTER OPINION OF IT. (HH)

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
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REPORT OF RESEARCH PROJECT TO DETERMINE EFFECT OF MASS CIRCULATION OF MACOMB COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE STUDENT NEWSPAPER ON PUBLIC IMAGE OF THE COLLEGE

By

Miles Meyerson

Publications Supervisor

August 14, 1967

JC 670 849

I.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

On June 15, 1966, the Publications Committee of Macomb County Community College requested that a survey be conducted to determine if mass circulation of the college newspaper, The Sporadic, has had an adverse effect on the image of the college.

Since the fall of 1965 the newspaper has been made available to the student body (currently numbering more than 10,000) by free distribution on campus and to some 42,000 homes in Macomb County by its inclusion as a supplement to The Macomb Daily, a county newspaper.

Macomb Publishing Company, which publishes the county daily, charges the college $150 for publishing each four-page tabloid edition of the college newspaper. For this fee the company provides enough copies of the college newspaper for direct distribution on campus and includes a copy of each edition of the college newspaper as a supplement in all copies of The Macomb Daily circulated on the publication date of the college newspaper.

As a result of this arrangement, The Sporadic may have the largest circulation among newspapers published by United States colleges and universities. The circulation of The Sporadic is 50,000. The University of Texas daily newspaper has a circulation of 22,000, highest among college dailies. Largest circulation among U.S. college weeklies belongs to Boston University, which recently reported a circulation of 10,000.

Although the MCCC Publications Committee has been impressed with the low cost of producing The Sporadic (three-thousandths of a cent for each copy) and the circulation, at no additional cost to college, to some 42,000 households in all sections of the county, some committee members expressed concern over possible adverse effects that mass circulation might have. They suggested that complaints and criticisms published in the student newspaper could damage the image of the college.

At the meeting on June 15, 1966, the committee proposed that a community survey be conducted to determine the image projected by The Sporadic as it is circulated in the county daily. As of that date members of the committee were Richard DeCosmo, director of student services; Eugene Guswiler, coordinator of student activities; Dr. John G. Thompson, coordinator of public information, and Miles Meyerson, publications supervisor.

Content of The Sporadic is determined by student editors, who are advised by the publications supervisor, who was a professional journalist for 17 years before he joined the college staff. The current editorial policy stipulates that students are free to comment on all issues related to the college, its faculty and its students. The staff is free to publish material which does not violate libel laws and which does not exceed the bounds of good taste. Although the latter restriction may be a subject for disagreement sometime in the future, to date it has not been a matter for dispute between the staff and its advisor.

II.

PERTINENT THEORY

According to a doctoral dissertation written by Norman B. Sigband at the University of Chicago, those who are informed about a college tend to have a more positive point of view about it. ("An Inquiry Into the Effect on the Community of Communications Distributed by a Public Junior College." Unpublished dissertation. College of Education, University of Chicago, July, 1954.) Sigband reported in this dissertation that his study indicated that assertions of opinions or beliefs do not have significant influence on the opinions or beliefs of those subjected to the assertions.

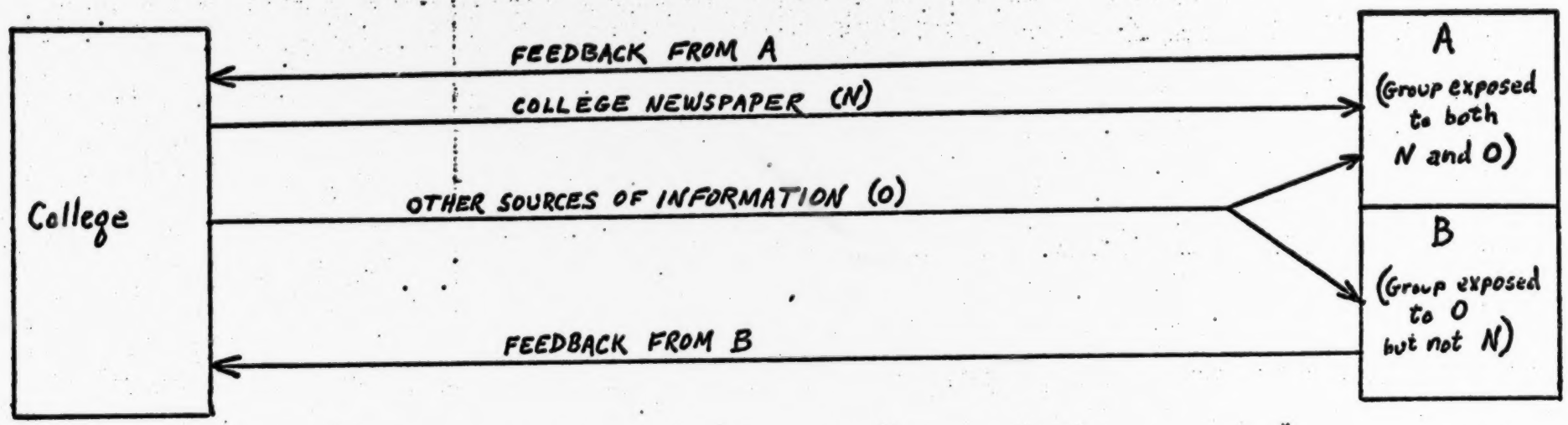
III.

STATEMENT OF HYPOTHESIS

If Sigband's conclusions are correct, those in Macomb County who are better informed about Macomb County Community College would have a more positive point of view about the college. If results of the survey show that the experimental group (comprised of those exposed to the student newspaper) holds the college in as high (or higher) esteem as the control group (those not exposed to the student newspaper), mass circulation of the student newspaper has not harmed the public image of the college. However, if the experimental group holds the college in lower esteem than the control group does, the indication would be that mass circulation of the college newspaper is harming the public image of the college.

IV.

MODEL



If A's image of college is at least as high as B's image of college, mass circulation of college newspaper probably is not detrimental to the college.

If A's image of college is higher than B's image of college, mass circulation of college newspaper may be advantageous to the college.

If A's image of college is lower than B's image of college, mass circulation of college newspaper may be disadvantageous to the college.

V.

DATA COLLECTION

AND INTERPRETIVE TECHNIQUES

The experimental group was comprised of subjects who said they have read the student newspaper. The circulation distribution of The Macomb Daily was represented proportionally in the sample. For example, 32 per cent of the sample was comprised of residents of Mount Clemens, which accounts for about 32 per cent of the daily newspaper's circulation. The same proportions were maintained for the control group.

Percentages for selecting the sample groups were:

Mount Clemens	32%
Warren	24%
Roseville	12%
Utica-Sterling	12%
St. Clair Shores	8%
East Detroit	8%
Center Line	4%

Although a much larger sampling was planned, the committee agreed that the results of the first hundred telephone interviews were sufficient to conclude that mass circulation of the student newspaper had not had an adverse effect on the public image of the college.

The committee agreed that extending the size of the samples would entail additional work without providing more conclusive evidence that the hypothesis was valid.

Here are the tabulations of the replies to the survey.

Question No. 1: How often do you read The Macomb Daily?

Answers:

Regularly--84% of experimental group
24% of control group

Occasionally-- 8% of experimental group
20% of control group

Almost never-- 4% of experimental group
12% of control group

Never-- 4% of experimental group
44% of control group

* * *

Question No. 2: Do you ever read The Sporadic, the student newspaper published by Macomb County Community College?

Answers: Yes--100% of experimental group
No---100% of control group

* * *

Question No. 3: The Sporadic is published every three weeks during the regular school year. How often do you read this newspaper?

Answers: Almost always--60% of experimental group
About half the time--10% of experimental group
Once in a while--30% of experimental group

* * *

Question No. 4: In your opinion, is the job being done by M.C.C.C. in meeting the education needs of its students. . .

Answers: Above average--6% of experimental group
0% of control group

Average--54% of experimental group
38% of control group

Below average--4% of experimental group
4% of control group

No opinion--36% of experimental group
58% of control group

* * *

Question No. 5: Compared with the general behavior of students at colleges throughout the United States, the general behavior of students at Macomb County Community College is. . .

Answers: Above average--26% of experimental group
10% of control group

Average--44% of experimental group
40% of control group

Below average--0% of experimental group
2% of control group

No opinion--30% of experimental group
48% of control group

E=Experimental Group
C=Control Group

	a.	b.	c.	d.
1. How often do you read the Macomb Daily?	E 84%	E 8%	E 4%	E 4%
	C 24%	C 20%	C 12%	C 44%
2. Do you ever read Sporadic, the student newspaper published by Macomb County Community College?	E 100%	E 0%		
	C 0%	C 100%		
3. The Sporadic is published every 3 weeks during the regular school year. How often do you read this newspaper?	E 60%	E 10%	E 30%	
4. In your opinion, is the job being done by MCCC in meeting the education needs of its students	E 6%	E 54%	E 4%	E 36%
	C 0%	C 38%	C 4%	C 58%
5. Compared with the general behavior of students at colleges throughout the U.S., the general behavior of students at MCCC is	E 26%	E 44%	E 0%	E 30%
	C 10%	C 40%	C 2%	C 48%

VI.

CONCLUSIONS

Sixty per cent of the experimental group reported that they read the student newspaper "almost always." Thirty per cent of this group said they read the student newspaper "once in a while."

Six per cent of the experimental group rated the college above average in meeting the needs of its students. None of the control group rated the college above average in this respect.

Fifty-four per cent of the experimental group rated the college as average in meeting its students' needs, compared with 38 per cent of the control group who rated the college as average in this respect.

Four per cent of each group rated the college as below average in meeting its students' education needs.

Fifty-eight per cent of the control group had no opinion on this matter, compared with 36 per cent of the experimental group who expressed no opinion.

* * *

Similarly, 26 per cent of the experimental group rated the general behavior of MCCC students as above average, while 10 per cent of the control group rated the students' behavior in this category.

Students' behavior was rated as average by 44 per cent of the experimental group and by 40 per cent of the control. Their behavior was rated as below average by none of the experimental group and two per cent of the control group.

No opinion on the behavior was students was voiced by 30 per cent of the experimental group and by 48 per cent of the control group.

* * *

Those exposed to the student newspaper rated both the college and its students higher than did those who have not been exposed to the student newspaper.

In each instance the total of those in the control group who expressed "no opinion" exceeded by more than 50 per cent the number of those in the experimental group who expressed "no opinion."

The results of this survey reinforce the theory that those who are better informed about the college have a more positive point of view about it.